

REMARKS

Claims 1-23 are pending. Claims 11, 12, 14-17 and 21 are amended herein.

Applicants appreciate the courtesies shown to Applicants' representative by Examiner Haran in the May 6, 2004 personal interview. Applicants' separate record of the substance of the interview is incorporated into the following remarks.

Figs. 1-4 are objected to for failing to recite that these drawings depict prior art.

Figs. 1-4 have been amended herein to include this legend. Therefore, the objection should be withdrawn.

The specification is objected to based on a blank space on page 1. The first paragraph of the application has been amended to identify the application indicated in the Office Action. Therefore, this objection should also be withdrawn.

Claim 11 is objected to because of a misspelling. This misspelling has been corrected. Therefore, the claim objection should be withdrawn.

Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, for allegedly failing to comply with the written description requirement. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

The present specification clearly describes placing a template opaque to the emissions over a straight cut portion of the substrate support sheet to form features, such as a puzzle-cut. The Office Action seems to assume that these puzzle-cut features extend across the width of the belt, as in the prior art. However, in contrast, the present specification describes the production of three-dimensional seam structures, as depicted in Figs. 5 and 6. See paragraphs 58 and 59. Such three-dimensional structures can clearly be formed by using a template placed over, for example, a straight cut end portion of the substrate support, as described in

paragraph 66. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the present specification, which includes the original claims, clearly provides written description for the present claims.

The present claims are supported by the original specification. Therefore, the rejection of claims 1-23 under 35 U.S.C. §112, first paragraph, should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph. Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

All of the claims refer to a seamless flexible electrostatographic imaging member belt fabrication method. Claims 16 and 21 have been amended to clarify that the bonding step provides a seamed belt. Thus, it is now clear from all of the claims that the belt formed from the flexible substrate support sheet has a seam. However, the coating applied thereto is seamless. Thus, although the flexible substrate support does have a seam, the resulting imaging member belt is effectively seamless.

Upon reviewing the specification, one of ordinary skill in the art would understand that the word "seamless" is used in the claims, not to refer to a belt that has no seam in any layer thereof. Instead, the term "seamless" should be interpreted based on the specification to read on a belt containing at least one seamless coating layer on a seamed substrate support, such that the belt, in its entirety, acts as a seamless belt.

With regard to the rejection of the term "first desired features," it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 10, 16, and 21 clearly recite the invention. In particular, these claims recite producing first and second desired features, which are subsequently overlapped to form a seamed belt. Since these features are overlapped, it is clear that these features are in the major planes of the belt, as depicted in Figs. 5 and 6, rather than along the edge of the belt. It is respectfully submitted that this would be clear to one of ordinary skill in the art.

The claims clearly recite the invention. Therefore, the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

Claims 1-23 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103 over U.S. Patent No. 5,549,193 to Schlueter et al. (hereinafter "Schlueter '193") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,688,355 to Yu (hereinafter "Yu"), U.S. Patent No. 5,997,974 to Schlueter et al. (hereinafter "Schlueter '974") and U.S. Patent No. 5,942,301 to Schlueter et al. (hereinafter "Schlueter '301"). Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection.

Schlueter '193 is directed to an endless flexible seamed belt formed by joining two ends of a material, the belt having at least one overlapping, butting, interlocking joint. See the Abstract. Schlueter '193 does not teach or suggest the fabricating method of any of claims 1-23, which utilize emissions or a laser beam to form a seamed belt and applying at least one coating over the seamed belt.

Yu is directed to a method for making a seamed flexible belt in which a flexible sheet having all of the layers of the belt to be formed undergoes ablation with a laser beam to remove a first segment of material from the first major exterior surface at the first marginal end region to form at least one recess and to remove a second segment of material from the second major exterior surface at the second marginal end to form at least one recess. The first marginal end region is then overlapped with a second marginal end region and fused to form a seamed belt. Col. 8, lines 1-22. Yu does not teach or suggest applying at least one coating on the seamed belt formed thereby. Instead, Yu teaches incorporating a charge transport layer and a charge generating layer in the flexible sheet that undergoes ablation. Col. 19, lines 54-63.

Schlueter '974 is directed to forming a belt by joining two ends of a flexible substrate, each end of the substrate having a plurality of mutually mating elements in a puzzle-cut

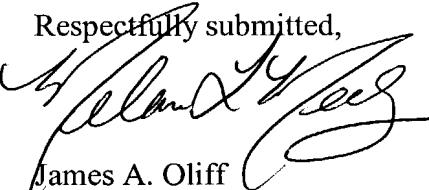
pattern. To form an effectively seamless belt, Schlueter '974 teaches applying an undercoating layer covering the substrate and the bonded seam. Col. 3, lines 40-60. The undercoating layer is applied in order to smooth the seamed surface for the application of the charge generating layer and charge transfer layer. Col. 4, lines 23-26. Schlueter '974 provides no motivation to provide a coating layer on the device of Yu where the charge generating layer and charge transport layer are already incorporated into the belt.

Schlueter '301 is directed to forming a belt by joining two ends of a flexible substrate, each end of the substrate having a plurality of mutually mating elements in a puzzle-cut pattern. Schlueter '301 teaches that the puzzle-cut pattern may be formed according to any conventional shaping technique, such as by die cutting or laser cutting with commercially available lasers. Col. 3, lines 39-42. In the Examples section, Schlueter '301 indicates that the forming/cutting can be done using a template. However, Schlueter '301 does not teach or suggest how the template is used and specifically whether it is placed on the support sheet to prevent emissions or a laser beam from striking the support sheets, and thus prevent removal of material from under the template, as described in the present claims. More importantly, Schlueter '301 does not overcome the other features of the invention. Specifically, Schlueter '301 does not provide any motivation to apply a coating over the seamed belt of Yu, which already contains a charge generating and charge transport layer.

For at least these reasons, Schlueter '193, Yu, Schlueter '974 and Schlueter '301 cannot be combined in order to achieve the present invention. Therefore, the rejection of claims 1-23 in view of these references should be reconsidered and withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-23 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,

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Attachments:
Replacement Sheets

Date: May 12, 2004

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